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POLITICAL RESULTS OF THE LIBERATION OF NORTH ITALY

The liberation of North Italy has brought with it a number of pressing political and administrative problems for the Allies, for the Italian Government in Rome, and for the individual Italian political parties. AMG authorities are faced with the immediate problem of how much local authority to delegate to the strongly organized Committees of National Liberation. In Rome negotiations have begun for the reorganization of the national government to provide representation for the North, the traditional center of gravity of Italian political life. In deference to political opinion in the North, where leftist sentiment is believed to be stronger than in South or Central Italy, individual parties may readjust their policy on important issues, thus producing a general realignment of Italian political forces. The question of the monarchy is only the most prominent among several controversial problems which will be revived by the completion of Italian liberation. Finally, the recent occupation of Italian eastern border areas by Marshal Tito's Partisans, who claim Venezia Giulia and the ports of Fiume and Trieste, will have important repercussions in Italian domestic as well as foreign affairs.

The chief political force in the North is the Committee of National Liberation for North Italy (CLNAI) which, with its subordinate Liberation Committees and military groups, actively assisted Allied forces in their Italian drive. The fact that the northern resistance forces had nearly one year longer than those of the South to perfect their organization may account for the superior political as well as military effectiveness of the CLNAI. A further result of the extended Nazi-Fascist occupation appears to have been an increase in leftist sentiment, which even before the war was stronger in the urban centers of the North than in the predominantly agricultural South.

Like its counterpart in Rome, the CLNAI consists of a coalition of the leading anti-Fascist parties. Among these the Communist Party is generally conceded to be the strongest both in numbers and in organization. The Socialist Party, which claims a considerable mass following in the industrial centers of the North, appears to have been somewhat weakened in that area by a divergence between those members who approve of the Communist-Socialist alliance of the party heads in Rome, and those who wish the party to remain strictly independent. In the North, as in the remainder of Italy, the Action Party is distinguished by the brilliance of its leaders and by its apparent lack of popular following. Its anti-Nazi activities, however, have been conspicuously large in proportion to its numbers. The Christian Democratic Party, whose mass following appears second only to that of the Communists, has recently

30

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absorbed many members from other moderate and conservative parties of the pre-Fascist era, and its strength is reported to have spread beyond its traditional stronghold in the farmlands of the Po valley. The conservative Liberal Party, which is numerically weak, has assumed the role of defender of the western traditions of constitutional government and of liberal capitalism. It hopes to preserve its influence by supplying cadres of skilled administrators in a coalition government rather than by competing with the so-called mass parties for popular support. The Labor Democratic Party, the sixth member of the Rome Liberation Committee, appears to be of negligible importance in North Italy and is not represented on the CLNAI.

Reports from various North Italian cities which were successfully liberated by Italian resistance forces indicate that local governments organized by the CLNAI were already functioning when Allied forces arrived on the scene. In localities where liberation had not been completed by CLNAI forces, carefully prepared lists of administrative officers were ready for the approval of AMG officials. Previous reports of leftist strength appear to be borne out by the lists of candidates thus far reported. In no case was a mayor chosen from the rightist parties and among the choices for vice-mayor only one conservative was named. While Allied authorities are said to have approved the CLNAI nominations of Communist mayors in Bologna and Modena and of Socialist mayors in Verona and Milan, the reaction of AMG officials to nominations elsewhere has not been reported in detail.

An important factor in determining the attitude of Allied officials will be the ability of resistance leaders to maintain discipline among their followers. During the early days of liberation the task of transforming a large and determined body of resistance forces immediately into proponents of law and order has presented considerable difficulties. The unauthorized execution of Mussolini and those captured with him was followed by a CLNAI communique ordering the immediate suspension of arbitrary executions. All persons being held for Fascist activity were ordered to be surrendered to the "justice commissioner" for trial according to the provisions of military law. Partisan groups were warned that the "Italian authorities and the AMG will take measures of extreme severity against all who infringe against this order." Nevertheless by 6 May summary executions of Fascists are reliably reported to have totaled 500 in Milan and 1,000 in Turin. Unconfirmed reports from Turin state that the local CLN has been unable to prevent looting of factories and warehouses. However, Turin, a traditional stronghold of leftist radicalism, does not appear to be typical of other North Italian cities, where CLNAI officials are believed to be generally capable and serious administrators. If leftist elements do not get out of hand and refuse to obey their leaders in official posts, Allied authorities appear likely to cooperate more closely with local Liberation Committees than was the case in the South.

In Rome it is generally believed that the Italian Government will

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be reorganized to permit adequate representation for the newly liberated areas. On 5 May representatives of the five parties of the CLNAI are reported to have arrived in Rome and to have held their initial conference with Premier Bonomi. Bonomi appears to be considering the feasibility of replacing his present four-party government (in which the Socialist and Action Parties have hitherto refused to participate) with a six-party coalition, which could serve until a constituent assembly can be elected and a constitutional revision can be undertaken. However, the Actionists are said to intend to remain outside the new Government, probably because they believe Count Sforza, whom they strongly backed for Foreign Minister in December 1944, would still be opposed by the British. The question of Socialist participation is more complicated. The Communist leader, Togliatti, is reported to have "begged" the Socialists to re-enter the Government and to have offered as inducement his support in obtaining important cabinet posts for the Socialist Party. The combined demands of the leftist parties are said to include control of the key ministries of War, Justice, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Treasury, all of which are now held by conservative leaders. The loss of any of these posts would seriously weaken the conservative forces in the Government, which may be expected to oppose the leftist demands with every means at their disposal.

Meanwhile there is evidence that the liberation of the North from Nazi-Fascist domination may induce a similar breakdown in the solidarity of the CLNAI. The tripartite agreement recently concluded in Modena and Turin among the Communists, Socialists, and Christian Democrats, appears to have been a largely unsuccessful Communist maneuver to preserve inter-party unity until the defeat of Fascism. A realignment into rightist and leftist parties in the North corresponding to that developing in the South would appear almost inevitable.

The question of the Italian monarchy, which has again been brought to the fore by the completion of national liberation, may prove a further source of division between conservative and liberal groups. The anti-monarchist policy of the leftist parties has been clearly established. The conservative parties, on the other hand, while refusing to commit themselves until the attitude of their northern constituents can be determined, have tended to support the monarchy. The impressive reception which Crown Prince Umberto is reported to have received during his recent visit to liberated Bologna has been acclaimed in monarchist circles as a sign of monarchist strength in North Italy. However, Umberto's reception appears to have been less happy in other North Italian cities, where anti-monarchist feeling is reported to be even stronger than in the South.

Finally the liberation of North Italy has revived acute Italian anxiety over the future of Trieste and Venezia Giulia, a part of the former *Italia irredenta* bordering on Yugoslavia. Yugoslav spokesmen including Marshal Tito have publicly declared their intention of annexing Venezia Giulia as far as the Isonzo River. Until recently the Communists,

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alone among Italian parties, had reacted favorably to Tito's demands. Cession to Yugoslavia of the Slovene portion of Venezia Giulia was advocated by the Communist daily, *Unita*, and Communist spokesmen semi-officially supported Tito's claims to Trieste. This attitude was maintained in apparent defiance of Italian popular opinion which, while it might accept the loss of Fiume and the hinterland of Trieste, is overwhelmingly opposed to a Yugoslav annexation of Trieste itself. Popular feeling on Trieste became increasingly clear during the final days of the liberation of North Italy, when the penetration of Yugoslav troops in Venezia Giulia provoked demonstrations throughout Italy. On 4 May serious rioting involving some 3,000 persons took place in Rome. Thereafter the Communist Party appeared to modify its stand. Togliatti issued a statement referring to "the Italian character of Trieste." A lesser Communist official, observing that "the Trieste problem must be discussed," declared that the issue would have to await a general settlement of border problems. Since the Communist Party in Italy is based on mass following, it can scarcely afford officially to defy the public will. Hence it may be expected to temporize on the Trieste issue, attempting on the one hand to placate popular sentiment, while leaving the way open for Yugoslav annexation if over-all Communist policy should demand it.

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